

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 9 AUGUST 2009

You are listening to ZS6SRL, the official radio station of the South African Radio League, the national body for amateur radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a webstream, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details. PLEASE NOTE: for audio via Echolink, connect to ZS0JPL-R.

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Your news reader this morning is (name), (call sign), on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria, with relays on 28,325, 14,235, 10,130, 7,066 and 3,695 MHz SSB, as well as 52,750, 438,825 and 1 296 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

In the news today:

BACAR: TWO LAUNCHES, BUT BOTH MARGINAL

SUMBANDILASAT LAUNCH DELAYED AGAIN

HAMNET FREQUENCIES

WANT TO USE AN EXOTIC CALL SIGN?

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

BACAR: TWO LAUNCHES, BUT BOTH MARGINAL

It was great excitement when BACAR balloons took the three payloads up in the sky, all, the HF beacon, the VHF beacon and the APRS beacon worked flawlessly. The excitement was however short lived when the payload and balloons separated soon after launch and BACAR floated back to the ground on its parachute. BACAR was recovered some distance from the launch site and brought back for a second launch attempt. On inspection it appeared that where two cords were connected the joint came apart.

With only two balloons in hand, a team was dispatched to Brits to buy up as many party balloons as they could. After inflating the two weather balloons, the party balloons and some plastic bags, BACAR took to the skies again, ascending very slowly. It reached about 2 400 metres where it seemed to hover. All signals were good and particularly the APRS signal attracted a lot of attention. It was possible to follow BACAR on the internet on the APRS site. The APRS data showed clearly on a map where BACAR was, the direction it was travelling in and its height above sea level.

However the party balloons and refuse bags deflated quickly and BACAR was on its descent back to the ground. The commentator at the launch site described it as a party in the sky.

The large crowd who was present at the launch scrambled to track BACAR and recover the payload which indeed it was in a very short time.

If you have any reports or pictures, please mail them to bacar@sarl.org.za.

When will another BACAR flight be attempted was the general question. We hope soon. Some dates in September are being considered and an announcement will be made next week.

SUMBANDILASAT LAUNCH DELAYED AGAIN

Problems with the main payload have caused a further delay in the launch of South Africa's second satellite, SumbandilaSat. The new expected launch date is 15 September. Once this date is finally confirmed, the launch campaign will commence with a team from SunSpace travelling to Baikonur to carry out final testing and preparing SumbandilaSat for launch. To learn more about SumbandilaSat and the various payloads visit www.amsatsa.org.za.

HAMNET FREQUENCIES

A decision has been taken to revert to 7,060 MHz in the 40 m band for Hamnet activities, with immediate effect.

On 28 March 2009, the majority of commercial radio stations, members of the international broadcasters organisation, vacated the 7,100 to 7,200 MHz segment as decided at WRC-03. Unfortunately, many non-members of this organisation have not yet vacated the band segment and one such station is still active around 7,110 MHz. This is causing problems with the effective monitoring and use of 7,110 MHz as the centre of activity for emergency communications.

It was suggested that 7,110 MHz still be monitored occasionally if only to ascertain whether the station in question has ceased to transmit. Hamnet could then decide to retain its current frequency or move to the Region 1 allotted emergency portion of the 40 m band. Subsequently, it was decided that the 7,060 MHz frequency would again become the preferred emergency frequency for Hamnet in southern Africa.

All other frequencies remain unchanged, but a frequency in the 30 m band is also being considered even though this band is not open to ZU and ZR operators. With conditions what they are at present, for longer distances during the day, the 10 MHz band is often a better alternative.

WANT TO USE AN EXOTIC CALL SIGN?

If you would like to use an exotic call sign from your QTH, speak to your club and encourage the committee to apply for one of the slots available from September 2009 to July 2010. The call sign is ZS10WCS, a special event call sign to celebrate the Soccer World Cup being held in South Africa.

Details were mailed to all clubs in the SARL letter several weeks ago. The letter can also be downloaded from www.sarl.org.za. Go to News and select Clubtalk and you will find the link.

The slots will be allocated on a first come first served basis except for the 10 day slots during the actual tournament, which will be allocated by ballot which will be held on 22 August at the SARL Radio Technology in Action symposium in Cape Town. The month of September has already been taken up by the members of the Boland Amateur Radio Club who have arranged to be in operation on several bands.

The closing date to be included in the ballot for the slots during the event is 15 August. Clubs are requested to complete the form included in the mailing and send it to wcs@sarl.org.za.

PRESIDENT S NET

The next SARL President's Net will take place on Sunday 16 August at 19:30. Clubs are invited to link up to the teleconference and carry the net live on their repeater and give their members an opportunity to participate in the discussion. To request a link, send an email to armi@sarl.org.za with the telephone number to be linked. Unfortunately only landlines can be connected.

PIO NETWORK OFF TO A GREAT START

The PIO Network enjoyed a great start last Monday evening with 11 participants. Two more clubs have since joined. If you are wondering what the PIO Network all about, it is a network of Public Information Officers who are dedicated to promoting amateur radio, their clubs and the SARL in the media. If you would like more information about the network, send a mail to pionetwork@sarl.org.za.

CONTEST NEWS

To celebrate National Women's Day, the first SARL YL Sprint will take place later this morning between 11:00 and 12:00 CAT on 40 metres. All female radio amateurs are requested to get on the air this morning and enjoy the Sprint.

This afternoon the SARL 40 metre mobile contest will be on the air from 15:00 to 17:00 CAT. Participants are encouraged to operate from their motor vehicles with the antenna as part of the vehicle. The exchange is a RS report and your call sign.

Portable "SiaS" (Shack in a Sack) stations are invited to take part in the 40 m mobile contest this afternoon. These stations operate in a portable fashion away from any support and vehicles, carrying their equipment on foot (minimum half a kilometre) to their respective operating positions. Antennas should be self-supporting (where there are no trees) and power supplied by batteries. Up to 100 watt, output power is allowed but most SiaS stations operate at low power, less than 5 watt. The organisers of the 40 m mobile contest have been applauded for allowing SiaS operators to participate as mobile operators not limited to a vehicle.

The International Lighthouse Weekend activity will be run over the weekend of 15 and 16 August. Ten South African lighthouses will be activated, seven from

the ZS1 call area and three from the ZS5 call area.

CLUB NEWS

At the AGM of the Zululand Amateur Radio Club, held on 2 August 2009 in Richards Bay, the following committee was elected:

Chairman: John Kramer, ZS5J; Vice Chairman: Andrew Jansen, ZR5MH; Treasurer: Willie Axford, ZS5WI; Secretary: Dawn Snyders, ZS5ME; Members: Jo Snyders, ZS5PO, Thys van Rensburg, ZR5TVR, and Warren Snyders, ZS5WOZ.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the expected solar activity will be very low. The geomagnetic field is expected to be mostly at quiet levels. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5. The sun has remained blank of sunspots for more than 27 days in a row. Hopefully it will not remain that way for much longer.

20 and 40 m will provide best opportunities for DX. Conditions to the East and the West will be good from the afternoon onwards. During the late afternoon and early evenings it will be good towards the North. In the morning it may be possible to make contacts with Australia. Contacts with New-Zealand may be possible on 40 m during the evenings. During the early mornings and evenings 40 m contacts may be possible with Brazil. The North Easterly, North Westerly, South Easterly and South Westerly paths will be challenging

10 MHz is looking promising late afternoon and after dark for the CW and digital enthusiasts.

The Northern California DX Foundation's international beacon network is monitored at the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory, ZS1HMO, and the signal strengths of the received beacons are automatically logged. The graphic results are available at [http:// spaceweather.hmo.ac.za](http://spaceweather.hmo.ac.za) and are very enlightening. Select "Ionospheric Data" and then "HF Propagation Conditions" to see which beacons were recently and not so recently received.

Vincent, ZS6BTY, publishes an excellent graphical link reliability prediction for all the amateur bands on the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club's website. This prediction is available at www.parc.or.za. Click on the "Propagation" tab.

The best way to defeat the current low solar activity is to improve your antenna setup. Dipole or preferably directional antennas at at least 12 metres above ground level are required to ensure that the radiation angle is low enough for long distance propagation. A good antenna system is one of the best investments a Ham can make.

Local conditions are going to be good on 40 m during the day time, especially for this morning and afternoon's HF contest. 80 m may perform well during the early mornings and late afternoons over the shorter distances, e.g. between ZS5 and ZS6. 30 m may perform well between ZS6 and ZS1.

80 m is the frequency of choice in the evenings. Fortunately the noise levels due to static discharges are on the decrease making contacts over the longer distances a bit more pleasant. Now is the time to start making those contacts for your 80 m “Worked All ZS” award!

Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF has the capability to pleasantly surprise you, but you will never know unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

9 August SARL YL Sprint and SARL 40 metre mobile contest; 15 and 16 August International Lighthouse Weekend; 22 August Western Cape RTA; 30 August SARL HF CW Contest.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news items, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans only to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp, not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the Amateur Radio Mirror International programme every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area, with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 570 kHz. There is also a podcast by ZS6RO. For the webstream and Echolink by ZS6FCS, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ‘ARMI’ and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a bulletin of the South African Radio League, compiled by Dennis, ZS4BS

Thank you for listening, 73. /EX